

## House Republican Press Release

February 17, 2006  
Press Office: 860-240-8700

### **Statement of State Representative Toni Boucher Feb. 17, 2006, Drug Free America Award**



I would like to Thank Drug Free America for coming all this way not only to recognize our state, but also to provide funding for two worthy young people who are attempting to get off a drug that is the process of ruining their and their family's lives.

I know that Speaker Amann and I share in expressing our gratitude for the honor of giving this wonderful gift to a young person who may have a chance at turning their life around. Few things we do in this Legislative Office Building could measure up to this amazing gesture. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

I know that most of my colleagues and Dr. Thomas A. Kirk, Jr., our Commissioner of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, stand firm on the issue of drug abuse, drug prevention and education.

We should also take this moment to thank our drug treatment professionals who continue to work tirelessly for our children and our citizens in Connecticut. I would also like to thank the many parent and civic groups from all over the country that come together to help us fight for our kids wherever they may live.

Losing a young person's life and their talents prematurely to drugs takes an enormous toll on our society. In fact, every 20 minutes, drugs take another life in this country. Every 20 minutes, the dreams, promise, and talent of a young person is lost—leaving families and friends to suffer immeasurable grief

There are some who would like to throw on the towel and say that the drug war is lost. Let's legalize them, just manage their distribution or, worse yet, teach young people to take illicit drugs "safely."

The President of the Connecticut Chapter American Society of Addiction Medicine recently stated that perception of harm is the most powerful indicator of drug use, that during the early nineties there was a clear **reduction** of this perceived harm; and there was a significant rise in the use of marijuana among young people. It has been pointed out that this correlated with the push to legalize it. He further states that there are very few young heroin addicts today that did not have a daily habit of marijuana in the past.

This is true for the Katz and McLaughlin families who continue to morn their loss in my district.

We speak for them when we say to those that seek to legalize these drugs, give them a “good” name or reduce sentencing in our legislature through lobbying groups or the seemly harmless nonprofits they establish which are known to promote the legalization of illicit drugs-- you will have a battle on their hands!

This battle will continue to be fought not by public safety officials alone but by parents who have lost their children, by those with cancer and other terrible affliction who know better than to be used as a ploy to make illicit drugs sound safe, by doctors, educators and by legislators who have taken the time to really study this issue in depth.

It will be a continual battle worth fighting with hands-on education, reaffirming the value of extraordinary teamwork and forward leaning reaction to those who have nothing better to do with their time than to threaten the health of our children, demean their potential, obscure the truth, and undermine the future of our society.

Thank you to all who worked so hard in the past and for the assurance of continual support in the future.